

Featured Audio Sermon: The Triumph of God's Glory

by Festo Kivengere

The sermon explores the triumph of God's glory in Jesus Christ, which overcomes the barriers between God and humanity, and how it relates to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and his return.

Duration: 44:02

Scripture: Isaiah 43:7, John 14:3, John 17:22, Romans 8:37, 1 Corinthians 15:54-55, Philippians 3:20-21, Colossians 2:10, 1 John 3:2, Revelation 21:4

Topics: "Gods Glory", "Eternal Kingdom"

Description

This sermon focuses on the triumphant glory of God, highlighting the journey from daily experiences to the ultimate return of Jesus Christ. It emphasizes the radiant character of God's love, the transformative power of Christ's death and resurrection, and the hope of believers being part of the glorious kingdom. The speaker urges listeners to embrace the triumphant King of Glory, overcome fear and hesitation, and boldly share the message of redemption with the world.

Transcript

Before I share with you this evening on this tremendous topic, which actually makes me feel terribly inadequate because of the fact that its dimensions can make angels clap, leave alone men. It is the very heart of your salvation and mine. So I think we better spend a minute or two at the Throne of Mercy asking the Blessed Holy Spirit so to come and take control as we sit at his feet.

Let us pray. Blessed Lord Jesus, King Triumphant, Victorious Lord, we lift these hearts in thanksgiving that when all was dark and gloomy, when sin was reigning supremely, Lord Jesus, you entered the gloom, you lifted the clouds, you brought the sands of dust into the amazing glory. Thank you.

Do that again tonight. For each heart, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The triumph of God's glory. Now, of course, primarily the second coming of the Lord Jesus, but that is the climax. You simply can never get excited by beginning there.

We have to begin where the triumph begins where you are. It is the triumph of that glory in daily experiences in America today, in Africa today, all over the world, which leads to the tremendous excitement of his coming to take the Kingdom. So we are going to begin a little further down the ladder.

And then, by God's grace, I hope we will get right up to the top of the ladder by the end of the 25 minutes. By the way, I was really scared to death when I looked at this topic. And as I was thinking about Billy's word and my dear brother, the elderly missionary, butterflies all over, I remembered when I was preaching in the Solomon Islands years back.

A young man was affected by this glory of Jesus Christ in his fullness. One hot afternoon in the church, in the island of Maleta. And without any invitation, this young man of about 20 got up, excited, and he came forward.

And this is what he said. He said, Brothers, me love Jesus too much. Me try speak about him other people, me shake, shake too much.

But me now know him proper, me shake, shake no more. Now that is pidgin English, you see, the beautiful expressive English kind of thing. And as this man was speaking, I now want to tell you at a banner, when I saw this glorious triumph of the glory of God, me shake, shake too much.

But as I look at you and as I catch the heartbeat of your experience and the eyes on the globe, me shake, shake no more. So now we start. Where shall we begin? Let us first of all read two verses in St. John's Gospel, chapter 17.

The Lord Jesus is speaking. So we begin there and we leave that and then I take you a little bit into the Old Testament, just for a background. Chapter 17, verse 22.

I will just read the two verses, 22 and 24, and you can look them up later. And he said, The glory which thou hast given to me. He is speaking to his Father for you and for me.

The glory which thou, Father, gave me, I have given to them. Who? You mean these believers at a banner, Lord Jesus? Do you mean that girl and that boy and that young man? And that African preacher trying to express himself? Lord, or do you mean angels? Who are these whom you have given that glory which your Father actually gave you? These who believe in my name. That is a wonderful beginning, 24.

Father, again he continues, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am. The purpose being that they may behold my glory which you have given to me because you loved me. Before the universe came into being, before time began.

Now this is Jesus praying to his Father. Almost lifting ordinary simple people into unspeakable, incredible kind of experience. Now let me just go and say, what is this exciting glory we are talking about? Do we understand what it is all about? Are we talking about angelic experiences such that they are in the third heaven which Saint Paul experienced? And therefore we sit down below and we long and we long and we sit back in despair.

What is this glory? According to the Bible, glory simply means the radiant character of the living God. The radiant character of the living God. And that radiant character is love.

For Saint John simply says, God is love. That is his radiant character. It couldn't be simpler.

And yet it couldn't be more profound. It is so profound that it will pick a believer from weakness and usher him into glory. That is the character, the radiant character of God, that glory.

And so when Jesus says, I have given you the glory, what does he mean? I have given you the radiant character, the image which you lost when you fell into sin. It is a complete restoration of what you lost through Adam. But it is more than that, for Adam only received the image.

Jesus is the very image of God. Shall I take you to the Old Testament a bit? And you may see what that radiant character was in the Old Testament. I will only give you a few examples.

According to the Old Testament, this radiant character of God, the shining excellence of his moral standard, always hit men and women. Men who were given the privilege of drawing nearer to God. For Abraham, called from his country, brought by grace, because it is only grace which can draw.

Then God says to Abraham, look here Abraham, I am the almighty God, you walk with me. And Abraham trembled and shook and hid his face. Always that was the effect of the glory.

It was shining, attractive, but always formidable, unapproachable, consuming fire. Of course fire is very attractive, isn't it? Its light attracts, its heat attracts, particularly at a time like this. And I come from Africa where we don't have this sort of thing.

However, fire attracts because of its light. Attracts because of its warmth. But at the same time, it has that in itself which refuses to be played with.

Put too near, become too familiar and you are burnt. That was the holiness of God according to the Old Testament. Abraham trembled, the old man, the friend of God.

Move on to Moses. A man looking sheep on the mountains. He had lost the vision of recovering the humanity, the human dignity of God's people.

They had become slaves almost forever, 400 years. Utter despair. Moses has given up and he is alone looking after sheep.

And then God comes in the burning bush. The bush in the desert became aglow with strange fire which never consumed him. Moses turns to look and the voice comes, I am the God of Abraham, the God of your father.

Take off your sandals, they are too dirty to approach. Moses hides his face, trembling with fear. Why? Because the glory, although attractive, it was still formidable, unapproachable and threatened.

Later on Moses has led God's people. And they have fallen into sin, they have worshipped idols. There is a catastrophic experience in the camp.

What happens? Moses goes into prayer. Hungry, thirsty, there may be renewal and revival. And he cries to God, God please show me your glory, your radiant character for these broken hearted people.

And God says, alright I will give you permission. I am willing, I am the God of grace. I am going to show you who I am.

I am going to declare my name to you so that you may know me as I am. But Moses, be careful, you can only see my back parts. My face you can't see, for no man shall see me and live.

Moses was permitted to see the back parts, but not the face. The face is not yet, the face to face hasn't yet come. Men can see the glimpses, they could see the glimpses of the glory in the Old Testament, Isaiah.

A wonderful prophet, proclaiming and challenging the corruption of his country. Full of zeal and fire. One day he is brought into the temple and the glory of the Lord fills the temple.

And the angel proclaims him, holy, holy, holy and Isaiah trembles. His sinfulness is exposed. He discovers that he is not what he should be.

And he cries, woe unto me, for I am undone, for my eyes have seen the glory of the King. Then a live call from the fire, from the altar, touches the lips of the prophet. The lips which used to pronounce judgment are synthesized, made sensitive.

The heart which was hard, judgmental, is melting with compassion. And the prophet is set on fire. Whom shall I send? And here I am, send me.

Liberated to move. You see what I am trying to say is that the glory was actually threatening. It was God as a consuming fire and no one could dare to approach with familiarity.

Men and women were attracted into that radiance but they were afraid. The bridge had not yet been created and yet that glory, that formidable glory which made people tremble, Moses and others, yet it was a liberating glory, triumphant. Abraham loses the paralysis of age.

And he begins to praise God and looks at the stars and counts them. My, he became a man with a tremendous exciting vision that glory liberated him. Isaiah speaks, the evangel, the good gospel, Isaiah chapter 53.

He discovers the Messiah. Moses the same, 80 years old, he leads his people from slavery into freedom. You could go on, but why should I? Let us go over into the fullness of the glory.

Now the glory has come. Jesus Christ, the one whom God particularly sent as the visible image of the invisible God, comes, St. John gives us the report. He says, and you have heard his words, first of all Jesus Christ says, I am the only one who when I come men will no longer be frightened by the glory.

They will of course sense the awe. They will be reverent, but they will no longer be threatened because the distance is going to be removed. The glory of God in Jesus Christ triumphed over distance.

No distance is left. Now you begin where? Pre-existence time. Jesus before time.

He says, God, I have now, I have a great desire. For what? I want these who believe to be with me where I am. That they may see the glory which you gave me.

Because you loved me before the foundation of the world. That is God overcoming the distance between eternity and time. There is no more any distance because the eternal one has moved to where men in their finite experience are.

That was before time was. God moved for you and for me. And then in his birth, I am going quickly a little bit.

So we have been told again and again in the Bible reading. John says, and the eternal word became a human being. What a coming.

Can you imagine God becoming a baby so that he may pick us in our weakness? Pick us up. Can you imagine God who is almighty putting limitations around himself? Condescending to be you and me in utter weakness. In so doing he removed the barriers between the perfect God and the broken humanity.

For he picked the pieces together. And out of those broken pieces of men and women in Africa, in America, in Asia, he created new men. We were picked up.

And because he became a human being, no longer can we accept any external difference. Because he came and he became a human being, he gives my Africanness a completely new value. You simply can't play with me alone.

No longer anyone can sit on another. Unless you want to sit on the Lord Jesus. For he became a human being.

And therefore all human beings, poor and rich, those categories are irrelevant. And man in his humanness is given an intrinsic value. Precious because Jesus came.

Apart from Jesus, human beings are broken up. Fragmented. Bits and pieces.

Hating one another because they hate themselves. No wonder. They are men and women with a civil war inside and therefore battles and wars all the time.

Broken homes and tribal wars and racial tensions and conflicts everywhere until he comes. And when he came, and if men listen carefully, then they discover that every man has intrinsically become very precious. He became one of us in order to make us what we should have been.

Glory, triumphing over our disintegration. That is a remarkable experience. What a beautiful, what a wonderful savior, what an almighty God.

And then he grew, he lived. Not only was he born, but he became not only one with us, but with us. Emmanuel, God, present with us.

Isn't that a tremendous thing? Have you ever discovered the glory of God, triumphing over loneliness, over universal dormitory? Those miserable rooms where you sit alone and you become so lonely that in the end you speak to pictures on the wall. And they don't answer back. Jesus comes.

Emmanuel, God, with us, accepts our infirmity. He puts our weaknesses on his humanity. And he becomes my brother.

And the experiences of life are no longer lonely and strange because I have got him there. I can whisper into his ear. This is salvation, triumphing over loneliness, isolation, meaninglessness.

No wonder people who have no Jesus are disciples of nihilism. What can they do? Life is empty. It is too lonely.

It is a forest of strange experiences. Jesus has come and he is with us. And you weep with him.

And you laugh with him. And he understands the pain. And you fail the exams and he holds your hand and says, Take it easy.

I will be with you next time. As I was with you in the last experience. In other words, because he is there, last experiences which break men and women become redeemable.

He overcomes those because he is present with us. And we move on. Then the glory is going up.

Not only living with us, but he picked up all the things which broke humanity. All the nasty experiences of our sinful nature. All the accumulated guilt.

And he put it on the shoulders of his God man. Steadily, firmly like a rock. Oh, what a love.

He moved into Gethsemane. He moved the hill of Calvary. He lifted that wooden which he was going to add.

And he died. Now you may say, is there any glory in death? You wait. That is the essence of the glory of the New Testament.

You take it out, there is no Christianity. You remove that essence of the death of Christ. Why am I talking like this? I am not lifting the death.

The death of Christ is the climax of love. And God is love. His radiant character is his love.

And love shines more when it is willing to die for the beloved. You can't beat that. There is nothing beyond that love.

If love so loved this broken humanity, that it took all the judgment and took all the burdens and went on the cross and hanged there like a criminal. Now some men say, well, what is beautiful about that? What is glorious about a criminal hanging? He was not a criminal. He accepted human criminality.

And he lifted it on his mighty shoulders upon his heart. And he triumphed over it. He triumphed over it for you and for me.

Do you know what happened on the cross? Two criminals are hanged. In the center, the glorious Jesus. His face is marred beyond recognition physically.

But do you know what happened? One man on one side was so exposed that he became angry and bitter and rejected him. And entered into despair. The other fellow, his eyes were opened, his heart was melted when he heard, Father, forgive them for they don't know what they are doing.

Immediately, the man who was dying as a criminal was ushered into the presence of glory. Liberated from despair. Removed from darkness.

And do you know what he did? He sang a hallelujah chorus on the cross. Do you remember that? And he said, King, when you come back in your kingdom, please do remember me. What a discovery! You mean this man who is hanging on the cross is a king? The cross is his throne? The thorns, the crown? A shattered body? A kingly body? A naked body covered with robes of a king? What a discovery! Glory overcame the despair of this criminal.

Triumph in glory of God. Love overcame the barriers. And the man was ushered into the presence.

And the king said, don't you wait for long. Today, you and me are going to share paradise. That was the victory.

The greatest victory. The climax of the glory. And it is because of this that we talk about his return with joy.

If you removed that one, his return would be a terrible threat. Humanity would be consumed like grass, dry grass in the fire. But because of what happened on the cross of Calvary, now you can lift your eyes and you can lift your head, and you look in the face of the eternal king and you say, King, oh, when you come back, remember.

And he does remember. For you have been engraved in his palms, says the prophet Isaiah. Your names are all there.

No matter how weak you are, you are there. And then the glory, the procession now moves on. The triumph is taking you now in.

And he was buried. And he resurrected. What does do? What does that do? The death overcame the sin and the guilt and the suppression.

What did the resurrection do? My goodness, it did everything. The resurrection of Jesus Christ, what happened? The last enemy of mankind is death. It makes men tremble.

It makes clever men weep. It is the point of despair, the point of departure, the dead end of the road. And Jesus entered the realm of death three days in battle.

Down there. And in the grip with that terrible enemy of mankind, and he killed death. Disarmed it.

Opened the grave. Changed the whole thing. So much so that for the Christian who believes in Jesus, death is not a departure, it is an arrival.

Death, praise God. Death is no longer dead end, it is actually the beginning. No longer the end, that's where you begin.

It is no longer darkness, it is the dawn of a new life. This is a remarkable experience, it never happened before. Jesus came out of the grave, triumphant, glorious.

You know, do you think he came alone? Not a bit. He came with you. The head came out, and so the limbs came with him.

You are there. I know you despise yourself, you say, Bishop, I am not that type. I know you are not that type.

God knows you are not that type, but Jesus knows very well he died for that type. The kind of you, with all the things which make you tremble, with all your limitations as a human being, with all your repeated failures, Jesus took you when he rose from the dead, because when he died, he gripped you. And so now you are in him as a limb, part of the body.

And the head climbs from the grave. And you are there. And you are given this experience.

Saint Paul says, we have been given the same sitting position. In Christ Jesus, seated in heaven with him, in him. So you are there.

So he goes and you go with him. And he enters into the presence triumphantly. And he sits on the right hand of God, the triumphant king of glory.

And what happens when he gets there? Then you, men and women, then we, wherever we are, find we are there. There is no longer vacuum in heaven. You look in and you see your brother.

And your brother is the king of glory. And he still has a glorified body, but it is your body. So your body is given that capacity.

We don't know exactly what it is going to be like, but I am going to tell you what John tells us. He says, we don't know exactly. Don't speculate about it, he says.

All that we know is that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. What a beautiful experience. And then having seated on the right hand of power, having done this, the glory reaches the climax when he sits there.

And the king says in John chapter 14. I have gone to prepare a place for you. There are many places in my father's house.

And because I have gone to prepare, I am coming back to take you to myself. So that where I am, you too may be there. Didn't you hear those words? So the return of the king, Jesus Christ.

What is the value of that? Let me tell you a few things. The coming back of Jesus means the completion of redemption. Things you know in part, you will know perfectly when he comes back.

Now you love in part, then you will love in full. Now you praise and get tired after four days at Urbana, then you will praise eternally without feeling tired. Oh my dear friends, it is a wonderful experience.

When he comes, all the hung ups will be hung up. Nothing will be left. You will be gazing at the eternal king and you will be lost in wonder and praise.

And when the king comes to complete our redemption, the decay will be taken care of. And we shall be given the bodies, not of corruption, but of incorruption. The glorified bodies given as a gift by the risen king.

Don't you like that? So you start here, don't you? I am not talking about a skepticism. There is no skepticism in Christianity. I am not talking about mere triumphalism.

Triumphant kind of experience, you know, look up, look up, look up when you are all the time looking down. I am talking about the reality of the king of glory who established a foundation upon which you can base your triumph. You are all in the procession and when the king returns to give men the completeness of the image of God, that glory.

Saint Paul says, now we see darkly in a glass. We can't see quite clearly, there are hindrances. When he, Jesus comes, we shall see as we are seen.

We shall see each other as we are seen. We shall see him as we are seen. We shall discover the depth of mercy and grace.

And then the king comes back to take his kingdom. He died and rose again in order that he may come back and take the universe. Not only men and women born again, but the rest of humanity and the rest of the universe will be under his feet.

And you will come with him. And you know what does that history? History for a Christian is no longer a cycle, a monotonous cycle like a Buddhist's prayer. Which makes you feel tired and get bored.

There is no boredom. History has got a direction and the direction is towards Jesus Christ. He is the goal of history because in him all things are completed.

It is he who fills all things with himself everywhere. That is when he comes back. And the king comes and you come with him.

And he takes his throne and men and women bow before him in praise. And others, because they rejected him, they are inevitably condemned. It is a sad thing, but it is biblical and true.

You reject him, the prince of glory, then you become the child of dust. Because he is the glorious one. You reject him, you reject the glory.

He is the prince of life. You reject him, you reject life. He is the completeness of what God means.

You reject him, God becomes a stranger. Life becomes just a disappointing experience, a dead end of the road. So he comes, then you believers are caught up with him.

But let me tell you just before I finish this talk. What does that do to you as a believer? What does it do to you to discover that he has overcome death? That he has overcome sin? That he has overcome a strange man? That your history has got a destiny? That the glory now is dawning and the end is no longer threatening. But it is attractive and beaconing.

It means now you can stand up from a banner. And you can face this redeemable world. It is still redeemable, you know.

It is not yet given up. And as I look at you, thousands of you, my heart beats fast. Can the world despair when the disciples, 17,000 of them, are in tune with the King of Glory? Tune up, will you? Get focused.

Attention upon Jesus Christ. And he is coming back to take his kingdom. What is your part in that kingdom? And some of you are trembling.

This triumphant glory makes weak men strong. Makes cowards into warriors. I know that happened.

I tell the story of the little children in Uganda. The oldest, 15, the youngest, 11, who died as martyrs in 1885. Who stood before an angry non-Christian king and said, We love to serve you, your majesty, but we can't serve if it offends our king, Jesus.

Ah, the king was furious. The mobs of non-Christians came. The boys were put in prison.

They were given a chance to recant the refuse. Because the spirit of Christ, the spirit of glory, had completely captivated them. And you know those three boys, they were led from the palace of the king.

Hands tied behind their backs. Into the place of execution, like the master. Four miles away.

The little boys were tied and put in the dry grass and burnt. And they died singing, Oh that I had wings like angels. I would have flown and been with Jesus.

The church began. They died and the church began. Three little boys.

Do you call that human courage? Who prepared them? You Christians? You talk about being prepared. Only when the glory penetrates your heart, that is the best preparation. Then suffering becomes a privilege, as we heard the other day.

Then you can stand not on your poor little feet, but on the eternal rock, Jesus Christ. And when a Christian has found that glory, he becomes invincible. May God bless you tonight, as you open your hearts.

Not to defeat, not to fumbings, not to endless discussion, but the eternal completion of grace, which is glory. Let the spirit of God usher you into the presence. Let the walls of fear and the clouds of hesitation give room to the brilliant person, Jesus Christ.

Then you can put your hand in the hand of the triumphant King. Then you can look Satan in the face and you say, Demon, and all your spirits and mini-demons and the rest of them. I want to challenge you and tell you, I am no longer a victim.

Under your dominion, I belong to the King of glory. And he is triumphant, and no ideology can stop him, and no weakness can stop him. He is triumphant.

He comes to reign, and he will reign eternally. Get ready, get tuned up, get refocused, and then get on the move. Isn't it exciting? It is exciting to be alive in America today.

Move on, if you have got a sentence, say it is 8. If you have got a banner to raise, raise it, even if you are trembling. If you have got a word, say it from the bottom of your heart. And if you have got a sin to repent, it can be forgiven too.

But I want to tell you, then when we meet there at his feet, as I conclude, what will happen? You think we are going to ask for rewards? Rewards are in him, because all the fullness of God is in Christ, and you are complete in him. That is the glory of the triumph of God. That is what the world is desperately in need of.

That is the glorious hope. Christ in you is the hope of glory. And get ready as you leave Havana, go singing.

You may not remember a lot of my words. One thing is important. That as you leave this conference, and as you put all the truths that God has given, the Spirit will remind you one important thing.

He, the King of Glory, is triumphant over America, over communist Russia, over China, over Africa, with its conflicting elements, over the church with its weakness. He is the glorious, triumphant King, and I am in the procession. Are you there? May God bless you.

Just as I close, may I ask you, in the presence of this tremendous King of Glory, and your hearts are beating in tune, and they are beginning to get to the temperature, if you have been in the procession as I spoke, and you see where you are in Christ, and you see what comes, then you cannot speak about things which hold you back. The chains fall down, and the heart is liberated in order that it may now tune up to sing the glory of the King from the heart. So we are going to end, not with an applause.

We are going to end with reverence. Our hearts, indeed, are going to burst into songs and hallelujahs, but to the King, not to the speaker. This little man here doesn't deserve one twenty-sixth of the clap.

If I wanted you to clap, I would have said, all of you stand up and applaud the returning King of Glory. Then I would say, yes, that's it, more and more, until you get your wings put on. So tonight we are going to close at this moment.

He is coming back. Signs are here, but we are not just enjoying prophetism. What we are enjoying is the fact, as we have shared, I desire, my Father, that they who believe may be with me where I am, that they may see my glory, the glory which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world, and the glory that you have given me, I have given them.

Have you received it? Are you still hesitant? He has given. You have received. Praise Him.

Because it is not you who made it. He gave. You received.

And because you received, you become responsible. Many Christians make a mistake. They say, Oh, I have received wonderful experiences.

The King is coming back, and they forget that that is burning fire. You can't sit on Christian experience. It burns.

If you think you are going to take all the truth from a burner and make them into pillows on which to sleep, you have made a big mistake. This is fire. You put your little head on it, it burns you, and then you move on.

Christianity is like that. It is a fire, dynamic. Let us move.

Come to Africa. Go to India. Go to China.

As ambassadors of the glorious King, speak without hesitation, because He is coming to take the kingdom. He is triumphant. Hell knows it.

Satan knows it. The demons know about it. They cannot do anything about it.

Take heart. Let us, in reverence, before I say the final prayer, bow to worship the King of glory. And if you are one of those who say, I don't know, but if you tell the Spirit, please Holy Spirit, make it clear that I may see the glory of my King reverently.

And if you have got things which have stood in the way, clouds which have hindered you from seeing the glorious King, will you repent? Will you ask for forgiveness? The King has the precious blood. The Holy Spirit will show you, so that you may go home a liberated Christian, waiting for the King. Oh, eternal God, it is a glorious experience that we are in your presence tonight.

Oh, how we praise that you overcame all the obstacles to introduce sands of dust into the glorious presence. Eternal King, you are coming back. We are waiting to meet you according to your own choice.

Oh, tune our hearts, Lord Jesus. Fill our hearts with the vision of your triumph. Help every believer to walk or move in the procession of the triumphant glory until you come back to take the Kingdom.

Amen.

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